

## **Oral History Cover Sheet**

**Name:** Frank Gutmann

**Date of Interview:** August 7, 2010

**Location of Interview:** Randolph, New Hampshire

**Interviewer:** Steve Chase

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Frank Gutmann was born in Lewiston, Maine on March 9, 1934. His mother was a homemaker and his father was in the wool and cloth manufacturing business. He spent his childhood going to summer camps, camping outdoors and hiking. He attended high school at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire and then went on to attend Amherst College, majoring in mathematics. Frank also spent time at Yale and Bowdoin College getting his master's degree in mathematics. In 1952 he became the caretaker for Crag Camp for the Randolph Mountain Club. He discusses how he got the caretaker job and some of his job duties that included checking Gray Knob, The Perch and the Log Cabin once a week, splitting firewood, and checking the outhouses. He talks a little about people's attitudes during his time as caretaker, what his high point was and even shares a short story of how he and another caretaker made ice cream from ice at the bottom of King Ravine.

**Steve:** Okay. The first I need you to do is just give us your name and then spell your name for the transcriptionist.

**Frank:** Last name is probably sufficient for spelling.

**Steve:** Sure.

**Frank:** Okay.

**Steve:** So your name is Frank.

**Frank:** Right, I am Frank Gutmann. My last name is spelled G U T M A N N and I live in Exeter, New Hampshire. I was the caretaker for Crag Camp in 1952.

**Steve:** That's great! And this is Steve Chase and today is the 7<sup>th</sup> of August and it's just before eleven o'clock in the morning on a very glorious weather day here in Randolph, New Hampshire. Well the first thing we do Frank is start with just some personal information, just quickly and wondering if you can tell us where you were born and the date that you were born.

**Frank:** I was born in Lewiston, Maine on March 9, 1934.

**Steve:** And can you tell us a bit about your parents? What did they do?

**Frank:** My mother was a homemaker; my father was in the wool and cloth manufacturing business.

**Steve:** And let's see, what did you do as a kid as far as outdoor activities? Did you, did you, did your parents have a place in Randolph?

**Frank:** I was...

**Steve:** Or...

**Frank:** I was fortunate to be able to go to summer camp for a few years. I learned a lot about the outdoors there.

**Steve:** What was the name of the camp?

**Frank:** The name of the camp was Winona located in Bridgton, Maine. And among other things I did a lot of water sports including, especially, canoeing where I got my introduction to poling canoes and whitewater.

**Steve:** Great!

**Frank:** Outdoor camping, some hiking in the White Mountains, just I think the first trips I remember were camp trips that went from the northern to the southern and that is spending the nights at Madison Hut and then at Lakes of the Cloud Hut. So that would have been about a three-day trip.

**Steve:** What was the first job that you had?

**Frank:** I think this was the first job.

**Steve:** Great. What high school did you go to?

**Frank:** I went to Phillips Exeter Academy.

**Steve:** Okay.

**Frank:** In Exeter, New Hampshire.

**Steve:** And where did you go to college?

**Frank:** I went to Amherst.

**Steve:** And what did you major in?

**Frank:** I majored in mathematics.

**Steve:** Did you have any graduate degrees or?

**Frank:** I spent one year (unclear) sorry, one year at Yale in their Master of Arts and teaching program. And I spent four summers, curiosity of the National Science Foundation, at Bowdoin College on summer programs (unclear) a degree in mathematics, master's degree.

**Steve:** Great. Did you have any mentors back then that encouraged you to do outdoor things?

**Frank:** I don't think of anyone in particular. I know that while I was in high school, I did a number of day trips and even over night trips up here in the White Mountains.

**Steve:** Okay.

**Frank:** So I was reasonably familiar with the area by the time I was graduating in 1952 and spent my summer here between school and college.

**Steve:** Who recruited you for the job here?

**Frank:** I knew the caretaker from the previous summer, his last name was Rice I think his first name was David but I'm not sure. And I knew that a man who had taught piano at the Academy.

**Steve:** Klaus Goetzke

**Frank:** Klaus Goetzke gave lessons at Exeter and so that's where I made the connection and I asked Klaus Goetzke if I could apply for this job.

**Steve:** Klaus Goetzke hired me in 1981.

**Frank:** No kidding!

[Steve and Frank chuckling]

**Frank:** This is (unclear) you probably know.

**Steve:** No. Yeah he was very kind to me, he was, it was, it was great. What would, what did; had you been to Crag Camp before you started at there as the caretaker?

**Frank:** I don't think I had been there, no.

**Steve:** Is it when you first got there, is it what you imagined it would be or was it different?

**Frank:** I, I don't know.

**Steve:** Okay. Okay, talk a little, talk a little about just daily activities that you did when you were at Crag.

**Frank:** Okay.

**Steve:** And let's see, what we got through that, we got through that one, what path would when you hiked up to Crag Camp?

**Frank:** I started from Jack Ruthman's farm, which I believe is the building...

**Steve:** Yep, Colbert farm is right over there.

**Frank:** (Unclear) drove over it and drove in and parked. It looked familiar, that's where I stored all my gear; that is things that I left down here and didn't pack to camp. I would come down for food roughly once a week. Someone would pick me up, drive me into Gorham where the RMC had set up a charge account that I could use at a food store. And then they'd picked me up three-quarters of an hour later and drive me back here. I would pack up and climb up to (unclear), what is it 3.1 or 3.2...

**Steve:** 3.2.

**Frank:** ...3.2 miles.

**Steve:** About 3,000 feet. What would your time be hiking up, do you remember?

**Frank:** I can't remember although I did, I did record it. I wrote a diary, I hunted for it before coming up here. I have an idea a that I loaned to someone, whom I'll mention a little later—and I'm not sure I've gotten it back yet.

**Steve:** Okay.

**Frank:** However I did; I was pretty—I have them but I have the figure of two hours in my mind. Does that sound...

**Steve:** Yep.

**Frank:** ...about on the...

**Steve:** That's...

**Frank:** ...pretty close.

**Steve:** ...that's about right.

**Frank:** Yeah, more or less.

**Steve:** Yep that's right, depending on how much weight you have. Were you comfortable in the woods up here, you felt comfortable?

**Frank:** I felt, I felt completely comfortable. I was; before coming here I had been up in northern Maine for three summers on long canoe trips, seven-week trips. Being out in the woods was nothing new, I was absolutely at home.

**Steve:** Great. What, what rivers up in northern Maine...?

**Frank:** Oh, St. John and the Allagash.

**Steve:** Yeah I've done both of those; I've done the Allagash many times and I did the St. Johns a couple years ago.

**Frank:** I wanted to go back to the Allagash and I was able to last summer and run it again.

**Steve:** That's great.

**Frank:** (Unclear) the lower part.

**Steve:** I did it this May and the water was so low I bet you they can't run it now.

**Frank:** Well we had to take off before Allagash Falls.

**Steve:** Yeah I did too.

**Frank:** (Unclear).

**Steve:** Yep that's right.

**Frank:** Yeah.

**Steve:** Let's see, where would you get your water? Did they have the water piped into the cabin then?

**Frank:** Oh yes they had water piped in. There was a man who was a really my main contact—his name will come to me. At any rate, he climbed up with me the first time and I think together we worked connecting pieces of pipe, which had been disconnected the previous fall.

**Steve:** Did you ever go over to the Perch?

**Frank:** Oh yes. I would check the Perch and Gray Knob and the Log Cabin once a week, that was part of the job. I never, I don't know, I might have spent the night in the Perch once; I think it was on a later trip on my own with friends.

**Steve:** That was my favorite water source of anywhere up there.

**Frank:** Oh yes, yes.

**Steve:** Just wonderful. Did you have any wildlife experiences, see any interesting wildlife?

**Frank:** I do not remember any, I probably did. But I don't remember.

**Steve:** What do you think the best part of the job was?

**Frank:** I—I don't think I'd pick out any one thing, I mean meeting people of course. Seeing the strange things they carried with them. These people would read the instructions on the boxes, on a box of spaghetti that you have to have, about a gallon of water for a small amount of spaghetti and they would attempt to boil a gallon a water on the Crag woodstove. Oh—there was one person in particular, from what I remember, his name was John Hatch. I didn't realize then as I do now that he was an extremely skilled painter, drawer; he was on the faculty of the University of New Hampshire. He must have spent two, three, four days up at Crag making sketches at least, I don't know—I don't know if he did watercolors or something, that kind of medium. But I was interested in meeting him and seeing what he did at the time and had no idea that I would meet him later on.

**Steve:** Huh.

**Frank:** And it (unclear) in the southern New Hampshire area. He's no longer living.

**Steve:** I'd like to see some of his artwork.

**Frank:** I can tell you where some of it is.

**Steve:** Where is it?

**Frank:** It's in a retirement community where I live now in Exeter name River Woods at Exeter. And his wife was one of the people instrumental in establishing the community. (Unclear) early residents.

**Steve:** Were there a lot of people that would come through Crag Camp then or did you spend long periods alone or?

**Frank:** There were, there were a number of times when I've had two, three, four even five days in a row with **no one (or no body)**. And then there would be some nights when it would be crowded. I think the largest group I ever had was something like 26 people. For what I remember as a place with twelve bunks.

**Steve:** So they slept out on the porch?

**Frank:** Oh, everywhere!

**Steve:** Yeah (chuckling). Lets see, can you describe a typical day, when you were up there?

**Frank:** I guess I got up and go out and check the weather. Days are hardly typical but things that I did as well as, as getting my breakfast, lunch and dinner and I did some baking of my own. And—I'd split some wood, sometimes I'd bring in a load of wood probably didn't bring as much as I should have for the coming season. One thing I always had to do was to check the outhouse, make sure that the paper supply was there and sprinkle in some—is it lime?

**Steve:** Lime, I think.

**Frank:** Lime.

**Steve:** Yeah.

**Frank:** Lime. I was at a stage in my life where I was beginning to get serious with photography so that I would often carry a camera around (unclear) whatever I did. Occasionally I would take a short hike up the ridge, sometimes just the tree lines other times all the way to the top of the (unclear). Once a week, as I think I mentioned, I would check the Perch and the Log Cabin and Gray Knob and maybe there was work to be done there, making sure they were clean, bathrooms were in order and things like that. And some dry firewood. I don't think those camps were used much that summer.

**Steve:** Did you have any experiences say seeing the Aurora Borealis or did you do any...?

**Frank:** I don't remember that, I do remember photographing sunsets. I had a radio with me and that was the summer of the political conventions so I remember listening on the radio to the Republican and Democratic Conventions.

**Steve:** Huh, interesting. What station was that?

**Frank:** I can't tell you, probably Berlin.

**Steve:** Yep that would make sense.

**Frank:** What was that, (unclear)?

**Steve:** Yeah, that's right. (Laughing)

**Frank:** Pulled that out of the air.

**Steve:** Yeah, that's right. What was the; of the people that visited, how would you characterize their attitudes—were they, were they up there just to have good time, were they there to be in wild nature, that kind of thing could you...?

**Frank:** Well I, I would guess that most of them were seriously interested in hiking and the mountains. They didn't leave the place a mess. I, I would say that their attitudes were positive.

**Steve:** Did you see many kids coming up there or was it mostly adults?

**Frank:** More, more adults than youngsters.

**Steve:** Did you have any contact with the AMC, people at Madison Hut?

**Frank:** Occasionally, I remember one night one of the people with whom I, I met several times. I knew he was going to there alone so I went over with him and helped him with supper. As a matter of fact I think I slept there and came back early in the morning. When my, I was pretty sure that I didn't expect anybody at Crag or not many.

**Steve:** Yep I did that a few times too. Was the Forest Service present, ever?

**Frank:** No more than once, if that.

**Steve:** Just a Range patrolman or something just hiking through.

**Frank:** Probably.

**Steve:** Yeah, that was my experience as well. What do you think the high point of your experience was when you were working at Crag Camp?

**Frank:** Well it was a great place to be and I certainly spent time watching the mountains, watching the valley, the clouds—but—(unclear) I have any one thing that really sticks out but I certainly enjoyed living there and I wasn't bothered being there alone (unclear) for several days at a time.

**Steve:** Do you think your experiences up there impacted your life after you left working up there?

**Frank:** Well I took a couple of groups up there afterwards, just weekend trips. But I, I don't think of them as, as you use your phrase "impacted my life." I do have one, one short story...

**Steve:** Yeah.

**Frank:** ...that maybe you should get from another caretaker for the following year whom I knew personally. If he's coming tonight, I understand, Larry Huntington is his name. And he and I, I went up to visit him and he and I filled our packs with a couple hammers and an axe and we went down the I think it's Great Gully trail I'm not sure, I'm not sure. That's not right, that's not the right one at any rate, down into the bottom of King's Ravine where, as you know, the ice can be under the rock glacier.

**Steve:** Right.

**Frank:** Year round.

**Steve:** Right.

**Frank:** And we cut 40 or more pounds of ice, packed it up to Crag and made ice cream there that night.

**Steve:** Wow that's great! Yeah, behind Gray Knob there was an ice cave and I had...

**Frank:** Oh is there, I never knew that.

**Steve:** ...I had a tin box and I could keep, it was like a refrigerator it was great. So that's fantastic, I've never heard of anyone doing that before, making ice cream that's fantastic! Did you have a low point when you were up there?

**Frank:** I don't think so.

**Steve:** Yeah, I didn't either. Did you have any experiences that were frightening or made you feel threaten or dangerous? Lot's of times that's related to the weather, I found.

**Frank:** No.

**Steve:** Also related to people's judgment too (chuckling).

**Frank:** Now that's true!

**Steve:** Yeah.

**Frank:** I mean if you, if you hear by the grapevine that somebody's in trouble, above timberline, then you, you do something or whatever. But I don't remember anything serious.

**Steve:** Yeah I was up there in 1990 with my wife for five weeks in the spring and one night it was raining and it was cold and we got the radio call that someone was in trouble, they thought up near Edmunds Call and they said, "Chase you're the closest so why don't you go up and check it out." And I said "Sure." You know but my wife was like "You're going out in this?" I said "Yeah." And then the radio call came in and said that the people showed up at Madison Hut, so I never had to go. So that was just as well.

**Frank:** And your (unclear) would have passed.

**Steve:** Yeah (laughing). Do you remember any humorous experiences with people?

**Frank:** I wish I'd found that diary.

**Steve:** Yeah.

**Frank:** I don't...

**Steve:** Okay. Do you have anything you'd like to tell people about your experiences there, like advice for future caretakers?

**Frank:** At this point I think I've said pretty much all that I can remember.

**Steve:** Okay.

**Frank:** And—I don't think I have, I don't think I have any special thing for this. Probably I should cuz I've taken a lot kids on hiking trips and—

**Steve:** Well there be a lot...

**Frank:** (Unclear) we all, I always insist you have to have a windbreaker. You have no excuses, you have to have it. And you have to have footwear that's going to give you support.

**Steve:** What kind of boots did you wear?

**Frank:** Well I wore Limmer's for many years, in fact still have 'em and still put my feet in them.

**Steve:** Me too. But I was bad I'd wear sneakers sometimes too. And I end up getting stress factors.

**Frank:** I didn't have Limmer's at the time I was at...

**Steve:** Okay.

**Frank:** ...I was at Crag. I had oh they were probably ten inch high, you call them woodmen's boots and I had metal caulks put in the bottom, stunts?

**Steve:** Yeah I think I know what you mean. Well is, anything else? Cuz I've gotten through my questions.

**Frank:** I don't think so; I hope this has been helpful.

**Steve:** Yes it has, it's been very interesting, a very good interview. And I appreciate it very much.

**Frank:** Well thank you Steve.